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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 15 titles deal with the following topics: methods for teaching students of English as a second language and remedial students in freshmen composition courses; Maryland community college English teachers' backgrounds and attitudes toward composition; two audio-tutorial methods for teaching English composition; recent reform in composition teaching; the effect of motivational story starters and assignment of general topics on intermediate students' writing ability; marking of student writing by Virginia high school English teachers; the effect of compensatory composition tracking on high-risk students in an open admissions university; a model for developing an interdisciplinary learning environment in writing and the humanities; relationships between the reading and writing of exposition and argument; the effects of oral and written teacher feedback; the effect on writing of extended practice in sentence-combining; an analysis and comparison of college English composition handbooks; the use of collaborative writing techniques in teaching composition; and the importance of knowing and using research in teaching composition. (GW)

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TEACHING WRITING THROUGH CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING ABOUT LANGUAGE

BORODKIN, Thelma, Ph.D.
Union Graduate School, 1977

This book is for teachers for use with students of English as a second language (ESL) and remedial students in freshman composition courses. The information contained here is based on my observations of ESL and remedial students over a number of years and especially during the course of one semester. During that semester, I observed both groups of students intensively; I collected data on the affective and cognitive aspects of the course. This book incorporates significant research findings, suggests some possible revisions in teaching, presents some lesson plans and states areas for further investigation.

Through consciousness-raising about language, students will hopefully become aware of the choice they are making in electing to learn edited American English (EAE) and the consequences of that choice. Furthermore, the linguistic information may enable students to gain a new perspective on language and how language works. Students may gain clarity on what EAE is and, through the use of some techniques used in ESL methodology, they may gain skill in EAE. They may also learn to use a variety of rhetorical styles – chiefly, argument and comparison/contrast. And, perhaps they will begin to view themselves more positively as they experience validation.

ESL and some remedial students differ from other college freshmen in two ways. They lack the linguistic skill in EAE, the English required at college, and they lack a positive concept of self. They share, with other college freshmen, though, the inability to use a variety of rhetorical styles in an essay of some length (500 words).

A cursory look at the educational scene today reveals large numbers of these students who are not being prepared to function in the academic and/or business world. By a process called "social promotion," such students are being moved ahead in the educational system until high school graduation. Then they find themselves functionally illiterate – people who only have elementary school level reading and writing skills. The literature indicates that many of these students lack a positive sense of self and further reveals a new emphasis on the involvement of the whole person in language teaching/learning. In addition, there is evidence that suggests that what goes on in the classroom must be meaningful if students are to comprehend and thereby learn. And, there are many who say that the examination of language, how it is used to and by people, is an appropriate topic for English classes.

The presence of large numbers of ESL and remedial students on urban college campuses is a relatively new phenomenon. The presence of these students represents a challenge to us, as teachers. There is little material that I have found to serve the special needs of such students, and this book is an attempt to help fill that need. Order No. 77-27,798, 271 pages.

A STUDY OF MARYLAND PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS COMPOSITION AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL, ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL BACKGROUNDS

CLINTON, Janet Kay Houston, Ph.D.
University of Maryland, 1977

Supervisor: Professor Leonard Woolf

The purpose of this study was to identify some of the possible influences on the development of English teachers' attitudes towards composition by examining the attitudes of Maryland public community college English teachers towards composition and by analyzing their responses made to demographic questions and a Likert-type scale.

The following hypothesis was investigated: There is a correlation between teachers' attitudes towards composition and their academic, professional and personal background characteristics. Twenty-six demographic variables specifically provided material to test the general hypothesis. These variables posed questions of what correlation exists between teachers' attitudes toward composition, as scored on an attitude scale, and seven selected academic characteristics, nine professional characteristics, and nine personal characteristics.

To investigate the main hypothesis and to answer the twenty-six research questions posed by the variables, a stratified random selection of 176 full-time and part-time community college English teachers was taken from the population of 283 Maryland public community college English teachers. A two-part questionnaire consisting of twenty-six demographic questions and twenty Likert-type statements about composition, was mailed, along with a cover letter, to each teacher in the sample. A fifty-four percent overall return from the 176 questionnaires yielded ninety-five usable questionnaires for analysis. Responses to the demographic questions were coded and scores for the attitude scale were tabulated for recording on computer cards.

Prior to the mailing of the questionnaire several tests of face validity were conducted with a pilot group of English teachers at Catonsville Community College, secondary education faculty members, and graduate education students. The reliability of the instrument was determined to be .65 using the Kuder-Richardson Twenty formula.

A chi-square test was used to test the twenty-six research questions at the .05 level of significance to indicate the existence of a difference between or among levels of a variable and a relationship between that variable and attitudes about composition.

Within the limitations of the study the following conclusions were drawn from the findings: (1) The research hypothesis that there is a correlation between teachers' attitudes and their academic, professional and personal background characteristics was not supported. (2) The question of whether a significant correlation exists between teachers' needs to improve their composition teaching and their attitudes revealed a correlation at the .05 level of significance between high attitude scale scores and those teachers who want to improve their teaching by discussing approaches with other teachers and by developing a new composition course. (3) The question of whether a significant correlation exists between teachers' enjoyment in teaching a subject and their attitudes revealed a correlation at the .05 level of significance between high attitude scale scores and those teachers who enjoy teaching composition. This correlation establishes the internal validity of the questions.

Implications for theory suggested by the data from the study are the following: (1) Although only two correlations in the backgrounds of the individuals in the study and their attitude scale scores were revealed, attitude theory indicates that attitudes are developed by learned experiences. Because this study indicated few significant correlations between background and attitude, it need not be assumed that what a teacher learns, does, or is has little affect on his or her attitudes. (2) A discrepancy concerning attitude behavior seems to be revealed in this study between what teachers say and what they do. The respondents in this sample recommended better preparation for composition teachers but not more preparation for themselves as composition teachers.

The data suggest the following implications for teacher preparation: Although composition is a major subject which is taught by a majority of the English teachers in the community colleges in Maryland, this study revealed that these teachers believe they are inadequately prepared to teach composition. Once teachers are better prepared to teach composition then perhaps the problems relating to inadequate student writing should be easier to identify.

Implications for research as suggested by the data include the following: Four-year college and university teachers' attitudes towards composition should be examined and compared with the attitude scores of the community college teachers in this study. The relationship between students' writing performance and their teachers' attitudes towards composition needs to be investigated. Replications of this study with other variables and combinations of variables might reveal significant correlations. The impact of the current emphasis on improving student writing upon teacher preparation programs needs to be studied. Classroom teachers need to be observed to see if there is a correlation between teaching and attitudes about composition. Order No. 77-29,144, 163 pages.

THE COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF TWO AUDIO-TUTORIAL LEARNING METHODS

CURRAN, Barry Neil, Ph.D.
Fordham University, 1977

Mentor: Joseph F. X. McCarthy

The purpose of this study was to compare two methods of teaching English Composition at Tunxis Community College. Two Audio-Tutorial approaches to learning were examined: the Audio-Tutorial approach with independent study and the Audio-Tutorial approach with interaction between the instructor and the student. The purpose of this research was to discover the impact of the instructor's role in the classroom as distinguished from a relatively independent, although not individualized approach to learning, and to discover the community college student's ability to transfer acquired skills to the organization of a descriptive paragraph.

The study was limited to a sample (N = 129) of Freshman students at Tunxis Community College in Farmington, Connecticut. The student population was mostly middle income and white. They were members of families whose income was between $4,000 and $20,000 per year. The study was conducted during the Fall Semester of 1974. Because the college policy allowed the students to choose their instructor and their class time, these factors precluded randomization.

The California Achievement Test Language, and the McGraw-Hill Basic Skills System Writing Test were administered as a group definition test. A descriptive paragraph was written in the first week and again in the ninth week after the students had completed the 16 modules and had referred to a specific text. The Criterion Reference Test published by Educulture was administered in the first week of the semester and again in the ninth week. The pre and posttests in the 16 modular units contained in the English Modular Mini-Course were taken as the students completed the units.

The analysis of covariance was used to determine the difference between the mean score and the standard deviation when the students were classified according to: high ability, average ability, low ability, sex, age, and hours spent in employment. The sum of the squares was used to analyze the posttest scores on the 16 criterion reference tests. The Pearson Product Moment of Correlation was used to study the relationship between the mean of the posttest score of the particular approach and the mean number of errors in the post-treatment paragraph test.

The analyses of the data show that: the S.D. in the Interaction Group shifted from 6.85 to 7.83; achievement was significant for the student possessing high ability; the scores of the older students were statistically significant; a significant difference existed between the pre and posttest scores of each module; there was a significant negative correlation between the Independent Study Group and the post-treatment paragraph test.

On the basis of these findings it was concluded that: a) the students' knowledge of grammar and the principles of writing a paragraph were as effective whether they worked by themselves or with an instructor; b) there is no relationship between either the sex or the age of the student or the hours spent in employment and the particular approach to learning; c) the modular lessons were successful in teaching grammar and usage skills; d) a significant inverse relationship existed between the posttest scores on the Criterion Reference Test and the post-treatment paragraph test (Independent Study).

It is suggested by this study that the Audio-Tutorial approach with interaction provided the students more opportunity to achieve higher scores on standard grammar and usage and more opportunity to organize logically a descriptive paragraph. Suggestions for further research include the use of new software and the inclusion of a comparative study of the number of errors in the descriptive paragraph of the experimental group and the control group. Order No. 77-28,074, 203 pages.

A PERSPECTIVE ON REFORM IN COMPOSITION TEACHING SINCE THE DARTMOUTH CONFERENCE Order No. 7800704

FIELD, Joan Tauber, Ph.D. Northwestern University, 1977. 181pp. Director: Wallace W. Douglas

The aim of this study was to make apparent a correspondence between the thrust of Anglo-American reform in writing education since the 1966 Dartmouth Conference and the thrusts of Deweyan progressivism and the British infant school movement. In the common tradition, John Dewey's philosophy on progressive education and the British philosophy on infant school education have been acknowledged as child-centered. Evidence in the literature suggested that the thrust of the recent "vanguard" in writing education was also child-centered.

To confirm this similarity, the "vanguard" in writing instruction since 1966 and the Deweyan and British positions on child-centered education were examined in terms of published statements on (1) aims of education, (2) learning theory, (3) curriculum design, (4) teaching methods, and (5) role of the teacher. These five categories were selected in the belief that an understanding of them would reveal a common view of the child's central role in the educative process.

Chapter I is an examination of John Dewey's progressive philosophy on student-centered schooling as evident in his own writings. Chapter II is a description of the child-oriented British infant school movement. It is based upon books, pamphlets, journals, and official reports by classroom teachers, government inspectors, and university educators concerned with reforms in primary pedagogy. Chapter III is an analysis of the Anglo-American "vanguard" in writing education since the 1966 Dartmouth Conference and is premised on the published observations and proposals of selected conference participants. James E. Miller, Jr., James Moffett, James R. Squire, of the United States, and James Britton, Frank Whitehead, Connie and Harold Rosen, of Great Britain, were chosen as spokesmen for the place of writing in the recent decade because of the attention they have given to writing education in their post-Dartmouth publications.

Chapter IV of this study confirms that, based upon the literature, the child-centered philosophy underlying Deweyan progressivism and the British infant school movement does correspond to the pedagogical philosophy characterizing the "vanguard" in writing education since 1966. This final chapter establishes that the most visible similarities are in the areas of learning theory, curriculum design, and role of the teacher.

John Dewey, scores of British infant school teachers, and representative English educators alike were discovered to perceive the learning process as a two-part enterprise necessitating an experience and an active agent. Representative English educators were also found to concur with John Dewey and the British infant school teachers that the curriculum ought to be child-centered (not content-centered) and that it ought to develop such that it originates in the private world of the learner and moves outward toward the public world of organized knowledge. The literature further revealed that "vanguard" teachers of writing, like teachers influenced by John Dewey and the British infant school movement, oppose the traditional role of teacher as pedant and endorse instead the role of teacher as "causer" of learning. They see themselves as facilitators of learning and not as conveyors of vicariously acquired knowledge. Their focus is on the learner and not on the learning material. Today's teachers of writing thus seem to be part of a re-emerging tradition known for its protest against formalism and its campaign for child-centered schooling.

USING STORY STARTERS AND GENERAL TOPICS AS MOTIVATION FOR IMPROVING WRITING ON THE FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE LEVELS

JOHNSTON, Laura Thomas, Ph.D.
University of Colorado at Boulder, 1977

Director: Assistant Professor Philip DiStefano

The purpose of this study was to evaluate over a period of nine weeks the effect of motivational story starters and general topics on the writing ability of fifth and sixth grade students. For a half-hour period twice a week, one group was given motivational lead-in sentences for narrative writing. A second group wrote on general topics related to the lead-in sentences during the same time, and a third group did no writing. An attitude scale was also administered before and after the writing period in order to determine if there was a change in attitudes toward writing among the three groups in each grade.

The sample consisted of 104 fifth and sixth grade children from four classes in one suburban elementary school in Boulder, Colorado. Students were ranked within their classes according to achievement scores obtained earlier at the school. Each matched pair within each grade was then randomly assigned to one of two groups, resulting in two experimental groups and two control groups for each grade level. Experimental group one was given story starters, and experimental group two was given general topics. Both groups were paired with their controls for the experiment, which utilized a factorial design involving factors of treatment, student writing ability, attitude score, and grade.

Pre- and post- writing samples and attitude scores were obtained from all the treatment and control groups. The writing samples were evaluated by the researcher using a T-unit measure, and then holistically and analytically by four trained judges in different sessions. The attitude scales were analyzed to determine if any change in attitude occurred during the writing experiment. The SPSS computer program was used to analyze the data obtained in both the writing and the attitude analyses.

Three hypotheses dealt with writing ability and three with attitude. In writing ability there was a significant difference between the experimental groups and the control groups, favoring the experimental groups in the holistic scoring ($p < .011$), in the analytical scoring ($p < .001$), and on all measures set to z-scores and summed across ($p < .028$). There was no significant difference between the two experimental groups, by treatment or by grade, in measured writing ability. There was a significant finding in grade and group interaction between the experimental and the control groups. The rejection of this hypothesis of interaction, however, is qualified in that the significant difference appears only in the T-unit evaluation when the three evaluation methods are considered separately.

An additional three hypotheses dealt with attitudes toward writing. There was a significant difference between grades here, showing the sixth graders to be more positive than the fifth graders toward writing. There was no significant difference between the two experimental treatment groups. There was a significant finding in grade and group interaction, influenced more by grade than by group.

Results of this study indicated that the writing experience of both experimental treatment groups helped effect improvement in writing. This experience also contributed to a more positive student attitude toward writing.

Order No. 77-29,933, 113 pages.

MARKING OF STUDENT WRITING BY HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS IN VIRGINIA DURING 1976

JONES, Bennie Evora W., Ph.D.
University of Virginia, 1977

Major Professor: Dr. Richard A. Meade

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this investigation was to answer three questions: 1. How do high school English teachers in Virginia mark written compositions? 2. Is this marking in accord with the recommendations for marking found in the literature? 3. Is there any relationship between the marking and age, number of years teaching experience, number of students taught per day, sex, and professional training of teachers?

To carry out the purpose of this study, one preliminary question has to be answered: What recommendations for marking written compositions are found in the literature?

PROCEDURES:

Examination of relevant research investigations revealed one study which afforded classification headings for recommendations for marking as well as comments, insertions, and corrections found on marked compositions. This study was Factors in Judgments of Writing Ability by Paul B. Diederich, John W. French, and Sydell T. Carlton. All comments, they concluded, found of marked compositions could be classified under at least one of five headings: ideas, wording, organization, mechanics, and flavor. These same headings were used as a basis for the present study.

Eight hundred and sixty recommendations were secured from all available sources. All referred to at least one of the selected headings.

A pilot study was conducted with four experienced English teachers to determine the feasibility of the study and to determine if the procedure of having teachers mark the same composition would bring forth responses which could be classified.

Information on teacher marking was secured by having a sample of 52 full-time tenth grade English teachers mark the same written composition.

FINDINGS:

The major conclusions of this investigation on teacher marking were as follows: 1. In general, high school English teachers in Virginia marked for mechanics, ideas, wording, organization, and flavor as recommended in the literature on marking. 2. Although teachers with different characteristics showed some slight differences as to the emphases placed on different recommendations, in general, there was no direct relationship between specific characteristics of teachers and the way they marked the compositions. Order No. 77-28,632, 160 pages.

THE EFFECT OF COMPENSATORY COMPOSITION TRACKING ON HIGH-RISK STUDENTS IN AN OPEN ADMISSIONS UNIVERSITY Order No. 7732869

KONEK, Carol Wolfe, Ph.D. The University of Oklahoma, 1977. 137pp. Major Professor: Herbert Hengst

The study analyzed the effect of compensatory composition treatment on a group of tracked High-Risk students, a group of untracked High-Risk students, and a group of untracked Regular students in an open admissions university. The effects of the treatment on performance outcomes, including exit examination scores, College English grades, and semester grade point averages, were analyzed with the use of analysis of covariance and discriminant analysis. Group characteristics, including student characteristics, educational background characteristics, academic aspirations, study habits, and related academic variables were analyzed with discriminant analysis to develop reduced-rank models of variables which distinguished between tracked and untracked High-Risk group members and between tracked High-Risk group members and untracked Regular group members.

Results of the study indicated that the compensatory composition tracking system under study had no statistically significant effect on College English exit examination scores, College English course grades or semester grade point averages when the ACT English tracking variable was controlled.

Results of the discriminant analysis of group characteristics of tracked and untracked High-Risk and Regular subjects indicated that differences between and among group characteristic variables permitted the construction of reduced-rank models for parsimoniously distinguishing between High-Risk Special and High-Risk Regular Group members, as well as between High-Risk Special and High-Risk Regular Group members. When group characteristic variables for all groups were entered into the discriminant analysis, High-Risk Special Group members were distinguished from High-Risk Regular Group members on a function of competence, but not on a function of risk. None of the reduced-rank models confirmed the supposition that the High-Risk student was an underaspiring student with poor study habits.

A MODEL FOR DEVELOPING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: WRITING AND HUMANITIES Order No. 7730843

McCOWN, Muriel Jean, Ed.D. University of Northern Colorado, 1977. 122pp.

The purpose of this study was to write a model for developing an interdisciplinary learning environment in secondary education at the senior high school level in the Language Arts curriculum. The model demonstrates the integration of selected content from a humanities course with purposes, structures, and techniques from a writing course. The integrated model also presents a relationship between specific writing assignments and specific levels of development in the cognitive domain.

The model consisted of six parts chosen to relate knowledge about humanities with knowledge, skills, and abilities in writing. Writing is defined as writing essays appropriate to scholastic needs and demands. Humanities is defined as studies in art, music, and literature. The parts were: 1. Major categories of cognitive development. 2. Divisions of humanities and divisions of writing. 3. The spectra of writing assignments. 4. A series of suggested writing assignments in art. 5. A glossary of meanings in humanities (art). 6. A glossary of meanings in writing (purposes, structures, techniques).

Related levels of cognitive development were interpretations from the authoritative source by Benjamin S. Bloom, Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain. Terminology in the field of humanities for art and music came from the text by Neal M. Cross, Leslie Dae Lindou, and Robert C. Lamm, The Search for Personal Freedom. Terminology in the field of humanities for literature came from the text by Lynn Altenbernd and Leslie L. Lewis, A Handbook for the Study of Fiction. Examples within the model are based on the Cross text and on the Metropolitan Seminars in Art by John Canaday.

The hypotheses of the study were that writing assignments could be limited by showing definite purposes for each, that purposes could correspond to particular levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities, and finally, that subject matter consisting of significant terms in a content field can be the beginning of critical research for the student writer. Validation of the hypotheses will await testing of the model.

It is recommended that teachers of writing use selected content fields as the source for subject matter in writing experiences, specifically as follows: 1. Inquiry should be made as to the transferability of this model to other curriculum areas. 2. An empirical design should be developed to evaluate the possible student gains, through the use of this integrative model, in developing writing competencies and increasing the level of understanding of the content field. 3. An empirical design should be developed to evaluate the possible student gains, through the use of this integrative model, in developing writing competencies by comparing these gains when using different content fields. 4. Inquiry should be made as to the relationship of the maturational level of students and the possible restrictiveness of vocabulary when implementing this model. Related, are there linguistic variations for any given verbs that may be more congruent with individual maturational levels?

AN INQUIRY INTO EMPIRICAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE READING AND WRITING OF EXPOSITION AND ARGUMENT Order No. 7732246

MAAT, David William, Ed.D. State University of New York at Albany, 1977. 119pp.

This study attempted to help find answers to these questions: (1) Will improvement by high school students in comprehending expository and argumentative prose be accompanied by their improvement in writing such prose? (2) Can significant correlations be found between students' skills in comprehending and corresponding skills in writing such prose? (3) Can significant correlations be found within the set of such comprehension skills and within the set of such writing skills?

Because of the limitations of a public high school setting, the study may best be called a field study helping to generate significant hypotheses for further testing in field experiments (Goodlad, 1969).

The study is based upon an Aristotelian four-cause model by which discourses are constructed. This four-cause model refers to reading and writing (Finder, 1971, 1976). The study is intended to help find an answer to this basic question: Are the conceptual relationships between the skills of reading and writing manifested empirically?

The study employed two groups of twelfth grade College Prep English students at Monterey High School, Monterey, California. Each group (n = 40) consisted of two classes each of computer-assigned students. For a period of approximately nine weeks the "treatment" group did not write for the English class but was instructed in reading comprehension skills according to the model under study and using class reading materials. The "control" group was assigned typical writing exercises, using similar reading materials, and was given comprehension instruction that did not specifically follow the model under study. The investigator taught the "treatment" group, and another teacher taught the "control" group.

Improvement in writing skills was gauged through pre-test and post-test essays evaluated according to the model; improvement in comprehension skills was gauged through written answers to pre-test and post-test questions based on the model. An independent rater was hired and trained to rate all tests. Appropriate t-tests were used to determine significance of (1) students' mean gains in "treatment" and "control" groups for both reading comprehension and writing, (2) product-moment correlations calculated between writing and comprehension scores according to the model, and (3) correlations calculated within writing and within comprehension scores according to the model.

The analysis of the rater's scores showed significant improvement in the total writing scores of all students, with "treatment" and "control" students judged in separate groups. There was a small and non-significant difference in gain on total writing scores in favor of the "treatment" group, a significant gain in comprehension scores for the "treatment" group, and no significant gain or loss in comprehension scores for the "control" group.

Correlations between reading comprehension and writing scores were significant only between the model's "Skills of Purpose" and between the total skills, although the average correlation between all corresponding skills was slightly higher than the average correlation between non-corresponding skills, neither these averages nor the difference between averages being significant.

Correlations within writing scores were uniformly high and seemed either to show writing as a unifactorial skill or to indicate that the rater tended to judge the essays holistically. Correlations within reading comprehension skills seemed, by inspection, to show such comprehension as a bi-factorial skill composed of (1) inferring the general purpose of the writer and (2) inferring how the writer accomplishes this purpose.

The final judgment of the investigator is that the three questions posed for the study are, on the basis of these results, worthy of further investigation, in relation to the model, under more rigorously controlled conditions.

A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTS OF ORAL AND WRITTEN TEACHER FEEDBACK WITH WRITTEN TEACHER FEEDBACK ONLY ON SPECIFIC WRITING BEHAVIORS OF FOURTH GRADE CHILDREN Order No. 7803669

MILLER, Timothy Eugene, Ed.D. Ball State University, 1977. 164pp. Adviser: Dr. Edward M. Wolpert

The purpose of the study was to compare effects of two types of teacher feedback on two specific writing behaviors of fourth grade children.

Experimental design of the study compared two groups using pretest/posttest measures: (1) Experimental Group I contained two intact classrooms with a total of forty-four fourth grade children. Treatment for this group involved having children write stories on a twice-weekly basis and receive a written and oral comment from the writing teacher about production of the stories. (2) Experimental Group II contained two intact classrooms totaling fifty-one fourth grade children. Treatment for this group involved having children write stories on a twice-weekly basis and receive only written comments from the teacher about production of the stories. No control group was used in this study.

Objective data obtained for analysis were derived from the measurement instrument, a rating scale, specifically developed for this study. The instrument measured four writing behaviors--originality, vocabulary, content and mechanics. Only content and mechanics were used in treatment. Each of these behaviors were rated on a seven-point scale, with seven the highest and one the lowest. The highest rating indicated maximal use and the lowest minimal use of a specific writing behavior.

The instrument appeared to have a high face validity. Examination of the items on the rating scale showed that they dealt with observable writing behaviors. To establish reliability of the instrument all compositions written were evaluated by a set of raters who were subjected to a series of training sessions in use of the instrument. Further, checks on reliability were made during seven of the fourteen writing sessions in the study. The reliability obtained by using the Cronback-Alpha Internal Consistency Index was obtained for each of the writing behaviors. Reliability coefficients were (1) Originality .99, (2) Vocabulary .84, (3) Content .84, and (4) Mechanics .62.

A writing teacher was hired and trained by the experimentor to use a standard format for stimulating writing behavior. Once compositions were rated by the raters two controlled written comments were placed on compositions by the experimenter. Control over comments were achieved through development of a series of prepared feedback guides. A guide was prepared for the two writing behaviors subjected to experimental manipulation: content and mechanics. Comments were corrective in nature and contained information about content and mechanics of the composition. Comments also gave the reader suggestions for composition improvement.

When composition were returned in each experimental group treatment was administered by the writing teacher. In Experimental Group I each of the children was given an oral comment, in the form of a brief conference with the writing teacher, which accompanied the written comment. In Experimental Group II all of the children were told to look at written comments, no further reference was made about the compositions. A general statement of praise about the classes compositions as a whole was given to both groups.

The following hypotheses were tested: Hypothesis I. There is no significant difference between the adjusted posttest means of Experimental Group I and Experimental Group II for the writing behavior content. Hypothesis II. There is no significant difference between the adjusted posttest means of Experimental Group I and Experimental Group II for the writing behavior mechanics.

To test the hypothesis an analysis of covariance was used. The pretest served as the covariate and the posttest as the criterion. For each hypothesis the obtained F-ratio did not exceed the tabled F-value for significance at the .05 level of rejections. The null hypotheses were not rejected.

IMPROVING SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC FLUENCY IN THE WRITING OF LANGUAGE ARTS STUDENTS THROUGH EXTENDED PRACTICE IN SENTENCE-COMBINING Order No. 7802703

PEDERSEN, Elray Lincoln, Ph.D. University of Minnesota, 1977. 102pp. Co-Chairmen: Gene L. Piché, Andrew MacLeish

This experiment was conducted to determine four things: (1) whether induced gains in syntactic fluency, achieved by subjects who have engaged in sentence-combining practice, are self-sustaining and long-lasting as measured by t-unit and clause length assessments. (2) whether subjects exposed to extended practice in sentence-combining will exhibit better judged overall quality of writing than comparable subjects will who have not engaged in sentence-combining as determined by a matched pairs, forced choice assessment; (3) whether subjects through practice in sentence-combining will score significantly higher than control subjects will on attributes of composition quality such as idea development, maturity and concreteness of content, as determined by a Semantic Differential assessment of student essays; and (4) whether subjects through practice in sentence-combining will score higher than control subjects will on gains in semantic fluency as determined by a Type-token and a Lexical Density assessment of student essays.

Four seventh grade classes were controlled for the variables of I.Q., sex and mode of discourse, with measurements occurring at pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test times.

The results of this investigation confirmed generally the four research hypotheses. Subjects who engaged in extended practice in sentence-combining achieved and sustained growth in syntactic fluency at the .05 level. No evidence of erosion in this growth was observed as measured by a t-unit analysis of a delayed post-test administered two months after the end of the treatment. Further, subjects engaging in sentence-combining practice achieved, at the .001 level, better judged overall quality of writing, confirming earlier research results.

In addition, subjects achieved growth at significant levels on teacher judgments of three attributes of compositional quality as measured by the Semantic Differential. Perceived attributes of composition quality found significant include idea development, maturity and concreteness of content. Further, gains on the Type-token analysis in this study were found to be significant, suggesting that experience in sentence-combining is associated with extra meaning and variety in student essays. Gains on the Lexical Density assessment of papers in this study were significant, but caution is urged in interpreting what this finding means.

In brief, the significance of this study is that it investigates and reports several important effects in writing associated with sentence-combining. These findings demonstrate that practice in SCE's is accompanied by measurable, beneficial effects observed in student narrative essays.

A COMPARISON OF CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED BY COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS IN A COMPOSITION HANDBOOK WITH CHARACTERISTICS OF RECENT COMPOSITION HANDBOOKS

PICKETT, Nell Ann, Ph.D.
The University of Mississippi, 1977

Director: Professor John R. Fawcett

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to analyze and compare college English composition handbooks from two standpoints: what college English teachers say that they want in a handbook and what is available in recently published handbooks.

PROCEDURES

The procedures used for the study were to collect data concerning desired characteristics in a handbook (through a questionnaire), to collect data concerning characteristics in recently published handbooks (through an analysis of each handbook), and then to compare specific aspects of the two sets of data. An item by item comparison was made of physical characteristics (number of pages, binding, cost, inclusion of exercises, availability of an instructor's manual, and availability of a companion workbook), textual characteristics (page layout, accessibility of information, appropriateness of examples, author's attitude toward language and dialect, style and tone, and race and sex objectivity), subject matter areas (grammar and usage, punctuation, words, sentences, paragraphs, whole compositions, and library research papers), and subject matter topics (subject-verb agreement, use of semicolon, wordiness, subordination in sentences, topic sentences, revising a composition, and documentation).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

As to physical characteristics, teachers indicated a preference for an inexpensive, concise handbook with exercises, an instructor's manual, and a workbook. None of the recently published handbooks fulfilled all of these preferences.

Regarding textual characteristics, teachers indicated a preference for a handbook with a page layout that uses emphatic spacing and boxes for most important concepts. Teachers stated that information should be made accessible through a detailed index, quick reference charts on endpapers, detailed table of contents, and guide words on each page; teachers said that a code system for rules should be included. Teachers reported that a handbook should have many examples, preferably from student papers, combination of sources, thought-provoking essays, well-known writers, and popular periodicals, and that examples should be student related. Concerning language and dialect, teachers said that they prefer a handbook whose author's attitude is descriptive rather than prescriptive, which is accepting of conventional practices, and which recognizes various levels of usage. In style and tone, teachers stated that they want a handbook that is informal, yet serious, and is addressed to the student. Teachers said that they desire a handbook that reflects race and sex objectivity. Most of the twenty recently published handbooks were unsatisfactory on at least one of the textual characteristics; seven handbooks, however, were satisfactory on every item. On an overall textual basis, three handbooks were unsatisfactory.

For subject matter, teachers stated that they want a handbook that treats with breadth and depth these things: grammar and usage, punctuation and mechanics, words, sentences, paragraphs, whole compositions, and library research papers. In their treatment of these subject matter areas and especially in their treatment of the subject matter topics, many handbooks were deficient. In fact, no handbook was satisfactory on every subject area and subject matter topic.

None of the recently published English composition handbooks sufficiently provided the characteristics that college English teachers desired in a handbook.

Order No. 77-28,971, 198 pages.

USING COLLABORATION TO TEACH ENGLISH COMPOSITION: THEORY, MODEL AND RESEARCH

Order No. 7731173

SALVNER, Gary Martin, Ph.D. The University of Michigan, 1977. 197pp. Chairman: Alan B. Howes

This dissertation examines the use of collaborative writing techniques in the teaching of English composition. Its purposes are to identify and describe collaborative methods, to formulate a rationale for their use, and to study the impact of one set of collaborative writing materials on ninth and tenth grade students.

A collaboration is defined as any writing activity in which a group of students works together through part or parts of the writing process. Collaborations can be classified into four types: student- and teacher-directed partial collaborations, in which collaborators undertake part of the writing task; and student- and teacher-directed whole collaborations, in which groups plan and write entire compositions together.

Arguments for collaborative use are of three kinds. Some teachers recommend collaborations because they increase interaction in the classroom. These teachers praise the humanizing influences and the peer teaching advantages of such interactions. A second argument defends collaborations as an effective method for teaching aspects of rhetoric, including invention techniques and the concept of audience. A third recommends collaborative techniques for their ability to make students aware of the dynamics of the writing process.

In this study a collaborative writing unit written by the author was tested for its impact on the attitudes, writing behavior, and writing ability of ninth and tenth grade students. The six-week unit presented collaborative techniques as ways to avoid "getting stuck" in writing and then applied those techniques to individual writing tasks. The basic teaching metaphor of the unit was, "writing is collaboration. If you want to write better, collaborate with yourself when you write."

Over the course of the unit, students' attitudes toward writing improved, but their attitudes toward writing in groups decreased slightly. Students were able to describe their own writing procedures in greater detail after participating in the unit, and they identified more writing process concerns (e.g., getting or expressing ideas) and fewer mechanics concerns (e.g., spelling and grammar) as their "biggest writing problems."

Writing behavior and performance generally improved over the course of the unit. Students spent more time preparing to write and writing impromptu essays after the unit, and they generally wrote longer papers. Students' writing rate declined, which was seen as a positive trend. Two of these changes in writing behavior -- the increases in prewriting and writing time -- were statistically significant at the .01 level of confidence. During the same period of time, a control group actually declined slightly in most of the same characteristics of writing behavior. As evaluated holistically by a panel of readers, the overall quality of the experimental group essays improved over the course of the unit compared to those written by the control group. The increase, however, was not found to be statistically significant.

The study recommends further research with collaborative techniques, including a careful examination of its proper role in a complete composition program.

THE EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION IN TRANSFORMATIONAL SENTENCE-COMBINING ON THE SYNTACTIC COMPLEXITY AND QUALITY OF COLLEGE-LEVEL WRITING
Order No. 7732787

SWAN, Mary Beverly, Ed.D. Boston University School of Education, 1977. 132pp. Major Professor: William L. Smith

In order to see if syntax and quality of writing would be altered during a sixteen-week instructional period, thirty-two upperclass college students received direct instruction in transformational sentence-combining as part of their basic course in composition.

Before, eight weeks into, and after the instruction, the students were asked to perform three tasks: 1) rewrite a passage of kernel sentences; 2) compose an essay on an assigned topic; and 3) edit that essay during the class period following that in which it had originally been written.

The writing samples were analyzed for T-unit length and clause length to see if and when changes in those structures took place and also to see if students made syntactic changes between draft writing and edited writing. The edited versions were also analyzed for quality using three trained evaluators who were asked to rank order the three compositions by each student. As a secondary evaluation, the compositions were paired in the following way: the pre- with the 8-week writing; the 8-week writing with the post-writing; and the pre- with the post-writing. Each of these pairings was evaluated by three different evaluators who selected the better of the two compositions.

The syntactic data were analyzed using ANOVA for repeated measures, and it was found that although the T-unit length did not increase significantly during the instructional period, the clause length exhibited significant gains on the passage of kernel sentences, the timed free writing and the edited free writing. Neither T-unit nor clause length changed significantly between any of the writings and the editings.

An ANOVA on the results of the quality ratings by three trained evaluators indicated that the final writing was significantly better than either of the other two compositions. Three t-tests were used with the paired compositions, and within each group the compositions written later in the instructional period received the higher rating.

The students wrote longer clauses but not longer T-units. The quality of the writing improved as indicated by the holistic evaluations, but a cause-and-effect relationship between instruction and improvement should not necessarily be drawn.

The pattern of growth on the three writing samples was different. The data indicated that the students applied sentence-combining as an editing technique first when they were not generating content as indicated on the earlier gains on the passage of kernel sentences and edited writing samples. The gains on the draft writing in which students were generating content were evidenced later in the instructional period.

KNOWING AND USING RESEARCH IN TEACHING COMPOSITION
Order No. 7803574

VANDEWEGHE, Richard Paul, Ph.D. Michigan State University, 1977. 225pp.

In order to establish solid foundations for composition programs, teachers and directors of composition programs should know about the research done in the field of composition and understand how it can be integrated with relevant theory into a comprehensive rationale for the design of composition programs. Three central arguments are advanced in this dissertation. First, composition teachers and directors of composition programs should know how to read research reports and should know what research has been done in composition. Second, in designing and carrying out composition programs, teachers and directors should use the insights available to them from research. Third, teachers and directors should integrate relevant theory and research in order to build composition programs soundly informed by the most significant and relevant information available.

Chapter I serves as a guide to reading research reports. Three essential elements of research design are examined in it--design validity, test validity, and measurement reliability. These three elements of design are frequently mentioned in the literature on research in composition, but are never defined in it.

Chapter II is a compilation of research done since 1963 in twenty-four areas of needed research proposed by Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer in Research in Written Composition (NCTE: 1963). Both published and unpublished research reports are examined, and recommendations for further research are made.

Chapter III is an examination of the arguments advanced against using research in composition as well as those advanced in favor of using it. A theoretical rationale for using the results of research in the design of composition programs is developed.

Chapter IV is an investigation of theory which bears directly on the teaching and learning of composition. Insights derived from learning theory, language theory, and composition theory are integrated with insights derived from research in composition to formulate a representative theory of instruction for composition.

Chapter V presents two major charges to the English profession. The first is that composition is an intellectually sophisticated field rich in knowledge and presenting numerous empirical, theoretical, and pedagogical challenges for researchers, teachers, and directors. Thus, composition should be recognized as an academic discipline in its own right. The second charge is that composition teachers and directors at all levels should receive specific training in research, theory, and pedagogy in composition and in related fields.